

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

TOM DAVIS, CHAIRMAN



MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release
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Committee to Examine D.C. Juvenile Justice System

Recent Teen's Death Raises Disturbing Questions

D.C. Police Chief Ramsey and Minority Whip Hoyer to Testify

**What: Government Reform Committee Oversight Hearing:
"Justice for All: An Examination of the District of Columbia Juvenile
Justice System"**

When: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2005 at 10:00 A.M.

Where: ROOM 2154, RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

Background:

The Government Reform Committee will hold a hearing on youth crime and efforts to reduce recidivism in D.C. The hearing will focus on D.C.'s juvenile justice system, with emphasis on the Youth Rehabilitation Services (formerly Youth Services Administration) and the agency reorganization the City is undertaking to comply with the requirements of the *Jerry M. v. District of Columbia, et al.* case.

Recent media reports detailing the death of 16-year-old Marcel Merritt, who had been under the supervision of the District of Columbia Youth Rehabilitation Services, raise doubts as to the adequacy of the current system.

A youth arrested in D.C. comes under the auspices of the Metropolitan Police Department ("MPD"), the D.C. Family Court, and YRS. Therefore, the Committee will hear from representatives of each component of the juvenile justice system who will explain their role in the system, the challenges they face, and possible areas for improvement.

Since March 1985, the District has been the defendant in the Jerry M. class-action lawsuit with the filing of a complaint challenging the District of Columbia's failure to provide the children housed at its Oak Hill facility with adequate care and rehabilitation

services. In July 1986, the parties entered into a Consent Decree and a Monitor was appointed to assess the District's compliance with its commitments. The District government has since reorganized the agency to address court orders. The Committee is interested in learning the status of the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services and its efforts to meet the criteria established in court orders.

In addition, the Committee will examine H.R. 316, a bill sponsored by Ben Cardin of Maryland that provides for the disposition of the Federal property located in Anne Arundel County, Maryland, a portion of which is currently used by the District of Columbia as the Oak Hill juvenile detention facility.

Witnesses:

Panel I:

The Honorable Benjamin L. Cardin, U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Steny H. Hoyer, U.S. House of Representatives

Panel II

The Honorable Lee F. Satterfield, Presiding Judge, District of Columbia Family Court

The Honorable Eugene Hamilton, Senior Judge, District of Columbia Superior Court

Charles H. Ramsey, Chief of Police, Metropolitan Police Department

Vincent Schiraldi, Director, District of Columbia Youth Rehabilitation Services

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